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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1223
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/FO:ATACHCO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/19/2016

TAGS: [IS](#) [LE](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: UNIFIL HITS MILESTONE FORCE LEVEL,
EXPANDS BORDER MONITORING

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason: 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (S) We were told today by Milos Strugar, UNIFIL spokesman, and by Imran Reza, Senior Advisor in the UN Office of the Personal Representative of the Secretary General (UNOPRSG), that UNIFIL forces in Lebanon have reached the 5000 troop level. Except for troops transiting in and out through Beirut and technical experts working on border points (land, air, and sea), the entire force is deployed in the south.

[1](#)2. (S) UNOPRSG is keeping this milestone quiet for now and will make a public announcement following the next tripartite meeting, among LAF, IDF and UNIFIL commanders, later this week.

[1](#)3. (C) Following General Pelligrini's public criticism last Friday of GOL foot dragging, Prime Minister Siniora seconded an advisor member from his office to assist UNIFIL in overcoming logistical impediments that were affecting operations.

OBSERVER MISSIONS

[1](#)4. (S) Geir Pedersen, UNOPRSG chief, told us on September 18 that his office and UNIFIL have been sending expert observers to the Syrian border and to Lebanese ports by helicopter and land to monitor LAF deployments and smuggling. According to his office, the mission has received excellent cooperation from the LAF. The Embassy has asked for an outbrief by the observer team.

[1](#)5. (C) French and Italian naval patrols are coordinating their efforts with UNIFIL and the LAF in Naqoura. Coordination with the GOL is occurring via periodic meetings in the Prime Minister's Office.

[1](#)6. (C) According to a Lebanese Foreign Ministry source, UNIFIL has opened a coordination office in Tel Aviv and has a coordination center in northern Israel working with the IDF.
FELTMAN